

IT is over two seasons since Wycombe Wanderers beat their local rivals Slough Town and on Thursday, the Blues know they must lay that 'bogey' if they are to maintain their challenge for the Rothmans Isthmian League title. The teams meet at Loakes Park, kick off 7.30 p.m.

Wycombe - Slough battles rarely fail to produce excitement and three points from Thursday's meeting are a must for Wanderers. The last two matches between the teams have produced 12 goals, the latest when the Blues went down 3-2 at Wexham Park earlier in the season.

Since then, the 'Rebels' have enjoyed a marvellous run in the F.A. Trophy, which ended on Saturday when they went down 3-2, at home to Dagenham, losing 6-2 on aggregate. Slough were facing a 3-0 deficit from the first leg and two early goals by Tim Turl and Roy Davies put them right back in the semi final. But Dagenham hit back with goals from Mal Harkins (2) and Jim Holder.

Both Slough and Wycombe were in action last night, the Rebels beating Hungerford at the second attempt at Elm Park, Reading. Slough manager Joe Arpino will be hoping to field his strongest side against Wanderers with Dennis Malley returning after injury.

Any hopes Wanderers might have of Slough suffering a reaction from the Trophy defeat on Saturday are likely to be unfounded. The Rebels have little difficulty in motivating themselves for this Berks and Bucks local derby and with five wins against the 'Blues' behind them, they must be confident of throwing a spanner in the title race.

Wanderers may have John Maskell back in goal for Peter Spittle, a former Slough player. Otherwise, they are likely to field their regular side. Among the Rebels team are two ex-Wycombe players, Alan Gane and Terry Reardon, the latter facing his brother for the first time since John took over as manager of Wycombe.